

DAVIDSON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (DUMC)

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Davidson United Methodist Church, intent on providing a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable persons who participate in programs designed to help them grow in their faith, enforces the Safe Sanctuary Policy printed below. This policy maintains guidelines and procedures set by the United Methodist Church to help ensure the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable persons. This policy is also designed to protect our adult volunteers as well as the church as a whole from unfounded allegations of misconduct. We believe the church should be a safe place for all ages to learn, serve, and grow in their faith. **Volunteers are defined as unpaid persons serving in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable persons. Children are defined as those persons from birth through fifth grade. Youth are persons from sixth grade through twelfth grade. Vulnerable persons are defined as any person, regardless of age, whose behavior indicates that he or she is mentally incapable of adequately caring for himself or herself and his or her interests without adverse consequences to himself or herself or others, or who, because of physical or mental impairment, is unable to protect himself or herself from, abuse, neglect, exploitation, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse by others. Staff and volunteers working with vulnerable persons will be required to receive additional training from the vulnerable persons training document.**

Selection and Training of Paid Workers and Volunteers

DUMC will order nationwide criminal background checks on all employees. (These will be filed in a locked cabinet and kept under the strictest of confidence.) The business office will run background checks every three years, and more often as deemed necessary.

DUMC will order nationwide criminal background checks on all adults who volunteer with children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons. Volunteers must complete a background form giving the church permission to run a background check. Checks will be run and reviewed by the program

staff person to whom the volunteer relates. (All documents will be filed in a locked cabinet and kept under the strictest of confidence.) Background checks will be run every three years and more often as deemed necessary.

The responsible program coordinator will contact previous church and/or personal references on each volunteer. Upon volunteer renewal, a personal reference is not needed for volunteers that have consistently served as a volunteer for two of the three most recent years in a similar capacity. The responsible program coordinator/staff person that has personally observed the volunteer's work will write, sign and date a statement of observation and include this in the volunteer's file. Persons refusing to complete a background form giving DUMC permission to run a background check, provide an accurate social security number for a residence trace, or who have been actively affiliated with DUMC for less than six months will not be allowed to volunteer with children, youth and vulnerable persons. Neither will any person who has been convicted of, or pled guilty to, physical and/or sexual abuse of children, neglect, or other serious crimes against persons (rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.), or against whom such charges are pending, be allowed to work with children, youth and vulnerable persons. A decision concerning a volunteer's service will be made after analyzing all information and taking into consideration the best interest of the participants involved.

In the event of a combined program with another church, an intern program and other similar circumstances, the Senior Minister or his/her designee may make an exception to the "six-month rule."

All program staff members are required to complete CPR and First Aid training every two years. Annual recertification is recommended. In the childcare area, there must be at least one certified caregiver in each room. It is highly recommended that volunteers working off campus also receive this training.

All DUMC employees and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable persons must attend one Safe Sanctuary Training Session in person. Annual renewal will take place online. A designated DUMC employee will maintain records of all screenings as well as completion of annual Safe Sanctuary training.

Guidelines for Workers with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Persons

All activities (in-person or online) for children, youth, and vulnerable persons will operate on the two-adult rule. A minimum of two adults are to be in or with each group. Two non-related, non-cohabitating adults must always be present. If the two adults are related or cohabitating, a third adult must be present.

Any group of children, youth and vulnerable persons meeting in a room without a hallway door/ window, should do so with the door propped open. Doors are never to be locked except in the case of a total church emergency.-Persons will serve as monitors during all ministry activities.

Recommended ratios for the leader and youth are as follows:

- Child recommended ratio for children's activities is 1:10 in the classroom, and 1:6 on trips or overnights.
- Youth recommended ratio for youth activities is 1:20 in the classroom, 1:15 on day trips and 1:8 on overnight trips.

On overnight trips, the majority of adult chaperones must be over the age of twenty-one. At the discretion of the program staff person leading the event, young adults under the age of twenty-one may be chaperones, provided they are paired with adults twenty-one or older and assigned age appropriate level of responsibility. There will be one female counselor per every eight girls and one male counselor per every eight boys. No youth shall be housed alone with an adult.

It is our policy that children, youth, and vulnerable persons travel with an adult driver and a non-related adult passenger who have undergone DUMC background checks. However, in situations where transportation needs dictate the use of personal vehicles in addition to the church vehicles, children, youth, and vulnerable persons may travel in a vehicle with only one adult driver who has undergone a DUMC background check provided that:

- at least three children, youth or vulnerable persons are in the vehicle,
- all passengers sit in the back seat or seats of the vehicle,
- the vehicle travels in a convoy with other DUMC vehicles

- communication between vehicles in the convoy is available at all times.

The exception to this rule allows for the child of the driver to ride up front. When a personal vehicle is used, the driver will be made aware that they are personally responsible for the safety of their passengers and that their insurance will cover any incident that occurs while traveling with the church. Likewise parents/guardians whose children travel in a personal vehicle will be made aware that the driver's insurance will be the primary liability coverage during travel. The only time a youth may travel alone in a vehicle is with their parent/guardian.

All participants and leaders are expected to behave in a Christ-like manner during all on and off campus activities sponsored by DUMC. Each class on campus and each group going off campus will sign a covenant of Christian behavior. If discipline issues arise, leaders should make one effort to resolve the issue with another adult present or as a witness. If the negative behavior continues, the leaders are to contact a parent/guardian and have the participant removed from the group. If a parent/guardian cannot be located, time out within the room may be used. No form of verbal abuse or physical discipline is ever to be used.

Adult volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable persons are to be at least five years older than the participant to whom they are assigned. DUMC values the presence of youth volunteers in Children's Ministry. Youth volunteers helping in a Children's Ministry area may assist in instances where there is less than a five year age difference and may serve as a third person in the room after the two adults per room has been fulfilled. It is recommended that youth wishing to assist in the childcare area complete a babysitter's course (Red Cross or Safe Sitters). Youth must be in senior high to volunteer in the infant nursery. It is also recommended that youth volunteers complete an online Safe Sanctuary training/questionnaire each year thereafter.

Any questionable or inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to the appropriate ministry leader as such conduct can precede abuse, even though the observed act itself does not constitute abuse.

Program staff and volunteer leaders driving children, youth, and vulnerable adults must pass a DMV check as well DUMC vehicle training. Each passenger must wear a seatbelt when available during DUMC off-campus trips. Double buckling is not allowed.

First aid kits are located in the Molly McKay House, each DUMC vehicle, in the first floor hallway (between restrooms), the second floor of the AEB in the kitchenette, the DUMC kitchen, the Chapel, the congregational care house and in the church office. Also, small kits are provided inside a Sunday School cabinet in each preschool and elementary classroom. Kits are checked and restocked as needed by church staff.

Other organizations that use church premises for children, youth, and vulnerable persons-oriented activities (for example, Boy or Girl Scouts) will provide a copy of their policy to the DUMC business office. Their policy must be compatible to DUMC's. After review, the Safe Sanctuary committee will be called together by the business administrator if anything is questionable. The organization will also receive a copy of the DUMC policy and will be responsible for adhering to it as well. The policy that is stricter will prevail.

Guidelines for Off Campus Staff/Chaperones

Children, youth, and vulnerable persons are to use the “buddy” system during all on and off campus activities. While using the buddy system, preferably three to four youth shall accompany one another. However, when this is not possible, the minimum number of youth using the buddy system should be two.

Parents/guardians are to be given detailed policies and procedures for all children, youth, and vulnerable persons related to off campus events. Itineraries will be distributed in addition to policies and procedures.

Children, youth, and vulnerable persons must complete a medical liability release form in order to participate in off campus activities. All forms must be signed by a parent/guardian.

Permission forms for prescribed medications to be taken during off-campus activities must be completed by a parent/guardian. Medications are to be under the control of and administered by an adult in charge, with the exception of Epi-pens, asthma inhalers, or other prescription medications in consultation with the trip leader. When possible, the group will be accessible to parents/guardians by way of phone.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians and Leaders

All children through the fifth grade are to be escorted to and from group activities/classes by an authorized parent/guardian or adult. No sibling is allowed to drop-off or pick-up.

Children, youth, and vulnerable persons are to use the “buddy” system during all on and off campus activities. While using the buddy system, preferably, 3-4 participants should accompany one another. However, when this is not possible, the minimum number of participants using the “buddy” system should be two.

Parents/guardians are to be given detailed policies and procedures for all children, youth, and vulnerable persons related “on campus” events. Itineraries will be distributed in addition to policies and procedures for all “off-campus” events.

Once on DUMC property, children, youth, and vulnerable persons will not be permitted to leave the church property, even with parental/guardian consent, until the event is concluded unless escorted by parent/guardian. Staff and volunteer leaders are placed in precarious situations when participants walk up or down Main Street for snacks, to meet someone, etc. .

For youth events, we realize, and ask parents/guardians to realize that we are a downtown church. Parents/guardians are advised to discuss youth group rules and regulations with their middle and high school youth. We ask that parents/guardians actively take a role in knowing where their youth are at all times. Once on DUMC property, youth are to remain on campus for the duration of the event they are attending.

Participants must complete a permission form in order to participate in off campus activities. A medical treatment consent form is also required. All forms must be signed by a parent/guardian.

Any prescribed medications to be given during an on-campus activity must be administered by the parent/guardian. Exceptions are Epi-pens and asthma inhalers.

To ensure Internet safety for our children, youth, and vulnerable persons, no names or personal information will be used on any DUMC sponsored platform. Parents/guardians must notify the church if they do not want a photo of their child, youth or vulnerable person used on any DUMC sponsored platform.

What to do when someone reports abuse or neglect

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
- Don't start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
- Don't promise to keep it a secret
- Report to Pastor of Education, Sr. Pastor or his/her designee

What to do if you witness abuse or neglect

- Call an ambulance if required
- Call the police if a crime has been committed
- Preserve evidence
- Keep yourself, staff, volunteers and participants safe
- Inform the Pastor of Education, Sr. Pastor or his/her designee
- Record what happened on Exhibit A (found at the end of this document and on DUMC website under resources)

Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Person

Incidents of abuse, or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse, of children, youth, or vulnerable persons will be reported as soon as possible to the Pastor of Education, the Senior Minister, or their designee.

The Senior Minister, the Pastor of Education, or their designee will report the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse to the Director of the Department of Social Services of Mecklenburg County using Exhibit A

The person reporting the incident will document, in writing on Exhibit A, all known facts and circumstances and will also make a report that documents all steps taken in the course of handling the reported incident.

All adult members of DUMC staff, and other adults participating in programs on the property of DUMC, are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children, youth, or vulnerable persons. Adults will be encouraged to caution others when activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate. The church will be supportive of individuals who in good faith make reports of actual or reasonably suspected cases of abuse.

Any organization that uses DUMC facilities will also notify the Senior Minister or his/her designee as soon as possible about any incident or suspected incident of abuse involving any person affiliated with such organization while using DUMC facilities.

The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Person

Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.

All procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting will be strictly followed.

All records relating to the matter will be maintained in confidential files.

All efforts in handling the situation will be carefully documented.

The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately.

The safety and security of the child, youth, or vulnerable person must be safe-guarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.

The liability insurer for the church will be notified about the incident by the Senior Minister or his/her designee, as appropriate.

An in-depth investigation will be carried out by church personnel under the supervision of the Senior Minister or his/her designee as well as by civil authorities if appropriate.

The Senior Minister or his/her designee will be the sole spokesperson for the church where media inquiries are concerned.

Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

Exhibit A – Davidson UMC Record of information of suspected or actual instances of abuse

<p>Person completing the form:</p> <p>Davidson United Methodist Church:</p> <p>Phone contact details:</p> <p>Date of Notification:</p>
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Details of incident/suspected or actual abuse

<p>Date of alleged incident/harm:</p> <p>Time of alleged incident/harm:</p>	<p>Area where incident/harm took place:</p> <p>Who reported the alert:</p> <p>Date:</p>
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Who was involved:

<p>Details of Alleged Victim</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Date of Birth:</p> <p>Phone :</p>	<p>Are they a vulnerable person? Yes/No</p> <p>Nature of alleged victims' vulnerability:</p> <p>Any other details (e.g. communication needs):</p>
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Details of Alleged Perpetrator

<p>Name :</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Date of Birth:</p> <p>Phone Contact:</p> <p>If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member please provide staff details (E.g. job role, employer, address of place of work)</p>	<p>Relationship to victim:</p> <p>Are they a vulnerable person? Yes/No</p> <p>Alleged perpetrators vulnerability (if applicable):</p> <p>Any other details:</p>
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Have you made the victim aware that details of the incident are being recorded and will be investigated?

Yes/No

If not, why not?

Type of Abuse (Please check one✓ or more)

Sexual		Physical	
Emotional		Neglect	
Psychological		Financial/Material	
Discriminatory Abuse		Verbal	

Description of alleged incident / alleged harm, detailing all people involved including witnesses

On this page please give a detailed description of the incident (please include times) and any other comments you feel are relevant. If necessary, attach further pages.

What action did you take immediately after the incident/allegation of harm (E.g. administered first aid, asked perpetrator to leave, took victim to secure area)

Were the Police called: Yes / No

Were any other emergency services called?
If yes, which service(s) **Yes / No**

Names of Police Officers:	Outcome: (Response time, taken to hospital etc)
Has the victim made any previous referrals/alerts? Yes/No	If yes, please provide details (e.g. dates, type of abuse):
Is the victim in immediate danger of further abuse? Yes/No	Have any immediate actions been identified to reduce the potential for further abuse? Yes/No
Has an initial assessment been made to determine further potential risk to the victim? Yes/No	What actions have been taken to reduce the potential for further abuse?
Are there any risks to others? Yes/No (Vulnerable persons, children)	If yes, please provide details (include who this information has been shared with – e.g. Police):
Signed:	Date:
	Time:

This is a confidential document and should be stored securely according to the procedures of Davidson United Methodist Church. It is your responsibility to ensure that this is done.

This report must be sent to the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services- Customer Connection Center: 704-336-3000

03/04/2021